

Tuesday, May 9, 1922.

THE PROBLEM OF THE URBAN CHURCH MOST URGENT

Bishop Warren A. Candler in Southern Christian Advocate.

One of the most common obsessions of our times is the mania for imagining problems and finding theoretic solutions for the questions thus raised.

This mania for making and solving problems always takes the direction of overlooking one's own problem and offering unfailing solutions for the perplexing questions with which others are supposed to be confronted.

Such is the current discussion by urban theorists concerning the rural pastor and the rural church. The professional "surveyor" has been making his "surveys" of the country church and prescribing panaceas for what he supposes are its ailments, although he has never served a rural pastorate and never will serve one as long as he can get a living in the field of a "surveyor," or in the office of some sort of "driver," or campaign secretary.

Some of his proposed remedies are little short of the ridiculous. To a preacher who has served and succeeded in a rural pastorate they seem positively laughable. For imaginary conditions are offered cures of pretentious and fanciful impracticability.

It is time to call attention to some indubitable facts about this whole matter of the country preacher and the country church.

In the first place it is worthy of remark that the urban church and the urban pastor are far less successful than the rural church and the rural pastor. The simple truth is that very many city churches are composed of country people who were converted before coming to town and who were more religious in their rural homes and churches than they have ever been in the urban habitations and temples to which they have removed.

What would become of certain city churches if they were no longer replenished by communicants drawn from country churches would be hard to say. Their very best members are "country people come to town." Urban life seems to be not most favorable to the highest type of religious life. Damaging distractions are on all sides. Sights and shows exclude meditation and prayer. The demoralizing "movies" and kindred things impair piety and incite to sensuality. Divorce suits and the profanation of the sacred institutions of marriage, which would shock rural communities are tolerated in the cities.

It was when a rural population proposed to build them a city and a tower reaching to heaven that God's judgment of the confusion of tongues fell upon them, and since Babel cities have been the points of greatest strain upon civilization. Thomas Jefferson expressed the hope that large cities would never exist in the United States and Prince Bismarck declared that cities were ulcers on the body politic which should be cut out.

The problem of the "urban church" is far more perplexing and urgent than that of the rural church. Let city pastors give all diligence to solve the problems right under their noses before holding institutes and delivering lectures for the solution of the problems of the rural pastor and his rural pastorate.

That the country church has not failed half so badly as some would have us believe is established by the fact that in the South, a section inhabited largely by country people, there is a greater number of church members in proportion to population than can be found in any other section of our country. In no other have the churches come so nearly to reaching and saving the people.

The country church may be dying in New England but it is not dying in the South. There were never so many prosperous churches in the rural sections of the South as there are now. Here and there may be seen a country church which has been abandoned, but in the majority of such cases, investigation will disclose the fact that it has been superseded by a more commodious building in a more convenient location.

A few rural churches have perished by temporary shifting of population, but they are likely to come back. With improved roads, rural telephones, free delivery of mails and improved schools in the country, rural life is becoming more inviting than it was formerly, and this will appear in improved churches also.

In country churches one is apt to hear the best preaching of the gospel. Sensationalism in the pulpit is scarcely found—and never patiently endured, in our rural churches. Nor is pseudo-science poured out on them by clerical pretenders. Rationalism finds no utterance there. For the most part "the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered." The element of wor-

and "St. Vitus-Dance activities" are not allowed to exclude that element as is not infrequently the case with urban churches. There is more preaching for edification and less pulpit-straining to be entertaining.

No, the most perplexing problem confronting Christianity in the United States is the problem of the urban church, and it grows more perplexing every day. Now that "the wireless" has come, it is quite probable that many back-slidden members of urban churches will forsake the assembling of themselves together in the sanctuary, and have their sermons served at home "on the half-shell." Why not? They care little for spiritual worship or Christian fellowship, and a novel entertainment on Sunday will be quite satisfactory to them after they have taken a turn on the golf links.

If the Christian Sabbath, as it has been known in the United States, is ever overthrown, it will be pulled down by urban people with the consent, if not the active cooperation, of many members of city churches. The Christian people of our country churches will have to save it, if it is saved at all.

The cause of temperance and prohibition must find the most faithful defenders and ardent advocates in the rural churches. It is so now. Urban influences and patronage keep "moonshine stills" going in rural districts to the discomfort of our best country people. "Bootlegging" relies on urban support for its life.

Dance halls, foul circuses, defiling "movies," and such like, find their strongest defenses behind city walls. Crimes of violence prevail in cities as they do not in the rural districts. In the course of a year there are in two cities of New York and Chicago more "mysterious murders" for which no one is ever arrested and punished than all the lynchings that occur in entire South. There is not so much ado made about the matter, but this is because the murders are too numerous to be very shocking; they are too commonplace to occupy much place in public attention.

Festering masses of evil abound in all our great cities, and indeed in all the cities of the world. A great gospel is required for their cleansing and redemption, although the most dilated preaching in the world is found in urban pulpits. "Problem novels," political issues, who shall have Macle Shoals, and other "current topics" displace the gospel of Christ in the pulpits of far too many city churches. The starving souls of urban peoples are given stones for bread until many of them turn away from such disappointing ministrations.

It would astound not a few city preachers to know how many men and women are living within a stone's throw of their churches without once darkening their doors who were once communicants in small towns and rural districts. Let them make one of the "surveys" about which some of them are so fond of talking, and they will be amazed by what they will find.

In a number of our Southern cities "simultaneous meetings" of an evangelistic sort are being held. If during these meetings the men and women, who have come into our cities from rural churches and failed to unite with any urban church were brought back to revived Christian life the result would be a new era in the religious history of the country. It is greatly to be desired that some such energetic effort be made in this direction.

There is a vast waste of Christian life in our cities. They are sepulchres of multiplied thousands of souls who were once active in rural churches. Why this waste?

It is time newspapers and magazines took a rest from their tedious discussion of the "problems of the rural church" and directed searching attention to the "problems of the city church." The urban problem is our imminent peril, and nothing else than a potential Christianity will suffice to solve it. Powerful preaching must displace much of the pretty pulpit-earcases in our city churches; and urban pastors who indulge such trifling could get valuable lessons on how to preach the gospel by attending some country churches and sitting in the pews.

As far as my observation extends, it seems to me that the country people are hearing the gospel in its most pure and powerful form. Very many of the city people are being fed on homiletic salads which are fearfully and wonderfully made—and of doubtful composition.

God be thanked for our rural churches and country pastors! They are saving much people alive upon whom the city churches of the future must depend for their best and most useful members.

Emma Goldman is now longing for the freedom which she scorned when she had it.

TRAVELERS HOLD ANNUAL MEETING

Meet Next in Charleston—Resolutions for Roads and Public Schools

The State.

Sumter, May 4.—The 18th annual convention of the South Carolina division of the Travelers' Protective association convened in Sumter this morning at 10:30 o'clock and paid such close attention to business that by 5 o'clock in the afternoon adjournment was reached and no morning session will be necessary.

The convention was called to order in the court room by the state president, H. Lee Scarborough of Sumter, and the invocation was made by the state chaplain, the Rev. W. E. Thayer of Sumter. Dr. Thayer also made the address of welcome, which was responded to by William Cogswell of Charleston.

Reports of the officers showed the organization in good condition, its membership having increased from 107 members in 1905 to 2,025 May 1 of this year.

Among the resolutions adopted by this convention was one commending the work and plans of the state highway department and pledging the organization's support to its future effort to create a state system of good roads. Another resolution emphasized that the public schools of the state were crippled by the failure of the last legislature to provide sufficient funds for these to meet their expenses and that the S. C. T. P. A. favored untinted support for free public schools. The convention went on record as pledging the individual support of its members to the incoming president and to working to make the coming year a banner one.

The newly elected officers are: President, J. H. Woodward, Columbia; vice president at large, H. Lee Scarborough, Sumter; post vice presidents, E. C. Ballenger of Spartanburg, J. N. Spann of Columbia, R. B. Tindal of Greenville, C. Ban Allen of Anderson, William Gaillard of Charleston, W. A. Friday of Greenwood, Cheafee Jones of Darlington, J. R. Carson of Chester, A. R. Booser of Newberry, J. P. Poag of Rock Hill, Dr. J. A. Ridley of Gaffney; secretary and treasurer, Joseph P. Noblett, Anderson; sergeant at arms, Sol Fleiselman, Columbia; chaplain, Rev. J. T. Gongaware, D. D., Charleston; board of directors, C. Ban Allen of Anderson; J. B. Shanklin of Anderson, S. Mac Sloan of Anderson, J. N. Watkins of Greenville, George Dearman of Spartanburg.

The following were elected delegates to the national convention to be held at Atlantic City June 5: At large, H. L. Scarborough of Sumter, J. M. Watkins of Greenville, J. M. Patton of Darlington; from the posts, Joe E. Gentry, Spartanburg; G. M. Gornley, Columbia; Holmes Allen, Greenville; J. B. Shanklin, Anderson; W. H. Watson, Charleston; J. E. Grimes, Greenwood; L. I. Parrott, Sumter; E. E. Carnes, Darlington; J. W. Young, Chester; R. D. Smith, Jr., Newberry; Henry Massey, Rock Hill; Dr. A. C. Crew, Gaffney.

The following deaths were reported during the past year: Charles R. Smith, Union; Thomas C. Huie, W. W. Moore and Charles M. Puckette, Columbia; John Joseph, Iler, Franklin L. Henry, Greenville; Lee G. Holleman and Broadus B. Babb, Anderson; Junius H. Wooten, Nashville; William J. Neeley, Rock Hill.

There were present at the convention 122 delegates from the posts at Spartanburg, Columbia, Greenville, Anderson, Charleston, Chester, Newberry, Rock Hill and Gaffney. Invitations for the next convention were presented from Charleston and Darlington and that of Charleston was accepted by a close vote.

The social features of the convention were a luncheon served at the place of meeting at 1 o'clock, a drive over the city at 5:30 o'clock, supper and entertainment at Pocalla springs at 6:30 o'clock, entertainment specially for the visiting delegates at a theater at 8:50 o'clock.

BY-WAYS OF STATE HISTORY

The Overhead Water Supply

Dr. J. W. Daniel in Southern Christian Advocate.

The providential factor, planned by the Creator in all His works, is the most wonderful feature of physical geography. Plato, old Grecian philosopher, said, "The beginning of knowledge is wondering at things." Things new because they are out of the ordinary grasp of our thoughts are sure to attract our attention, and, therefore, awaken the mind to research. The mental attitude of wonder holds a unique place in the richer revelation of God through His Son. All who heard the story of His birth from the lips of the shepherds "Wondered at those things which were told them." In the ministry of Christ the "Multitudes wonder" at His works and the gracious words he spoke. The Apostles and disciples wondered at His resurrection. Plato was right, the mind has to be shaken out of its lethargy by the unusual before it begins to investigate. The Gospel of Christ recognizes that fact, we have to be driven to thought by the wooing of things we do not understand.

No one can stand and think scientifically of the scrub-crowned sandhills of Carolina without thinking of a Provident Creator and His wonderful provisions for His children. I have already written of the inexhaustible reservoirs beneath them and which make them an inestimable blessing to a large area of the state. God did not, in His creative skill, relative to the sandhills, limit His providential blessings and forethought to the immense cisterns of fresh water that lie beneath their healthful heights, but, wonderful to realize, he made an overhead water supply for one of the most fertile districts of the state. Before the creation of an atom of matter God carefully considered and provided for the wants of all the living beings that would come into existence. He laid His hand on the ocean in the centuries of the long ago and made it build the High Hills of the Santee to minister most prodigally to the needs of His creatures, and I can not think or write of them without an overawing sense of wonder. Like Wordsworth I am constrained to ex-

claim.

"I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing  
The still, sad music of humanity  
Not harsh nor grating, though of ample  
power  
To chasten and subdue. And I have  
felt  
A presence that disturbs me with joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply inter-  
fused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting  
suns,  
And the round ocean and the living  
air,  
And the blue sky and the mind of  
man;  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all  
thought,  
And rolls through all things."

The uncultured may see no use for the sand-hills, but if they knew God they would see otherwise. The barren sand-dunes are simply waste lands to people who see no farther than the dollar, and who estimate things by what they can get out of them by the quickest returns; such men may be considered practical by their kind. A little more culture on the part of such people, and in those who esteem such men to be of good practical judgment, would make them realize that the sand hills of central Carolina are by far the most valuable assets of the state.

The High Hills of Santee slope towards the basins of Black and Santee river and govern the rain supply of the entire upper Pine Belt. Mills wrote in 1825 that thoughtful and observant men had noticed for thirty years that all the summer showers came from the direction of the sandhills and that the only exceptions were when there was continued wet weather and then the rains came from any direction. That was a fact then and will continue to be a fact as long as the world stands.

When we connect these high sand dunes with the design of their Creator we are over-awed with wonder at the forethought of God. They were built just high enough. They were sloped so as to drain themselves

dry. That insures a dry atmosphere to enshroud them. Their soil was made porous so that the falling rain might sink quickly into the subterranean bins and the breezes fan their tops when it is calm everywhere to keep them dry. Their height and the dryness of their atmosphere condense the inrolling clouds of vapours from the Atlantic and the coastal plains and pour them out in refreshing showers over the broad fields of corn and cotton that stretch away towards the ocean.

If there were no sand hills, therefore, stretching across our state, the vapors from the Atlantic would flow upward toward the Blue Ridge, and at last reaching the mountains, or the Piedmont hills, before condensed the showers produced by them, just at the time most needed by the agriculturist, would rarely reach central Carolina, and, therefore, the rich lands of the Upper Pine Belt would be almost worthless for agricultural purposes, because they would be largely destitute of those over-head blessings so essential to full harvests. The showers would exhaust themselves in the country that intervenes between central Carolina and the mountains.

The Blue Ridge was the first vapor condensing factor. At that far off time the ocean rolled its waves against the Piedmont counties; and in the centuries that God was preparing to withdraw it from all lower Carolina He was casting up great sand hills by means of the inrolling waves. When the work was completed the waters withdrew and left a second line of defense, as the military men say, against drought and an insufficient rain supply on the central portion of the state. Could design ever be more really definite? Could the beneficent forethought of Him who rules the wind and the waves be more plainly written for short-sighted men's instruction?

Surely, then, the sand hills are valuable and he is not a practical man who is so near-sighted as not to be able to see that far; but too illiterate to read the divine hand-writing in the sand. The Divine Son once stooped down and wrote with His finger in the sands of earth because He was ashamed of the unblushing and self-assertive hypocrites who would have Him underwrite the death-warrant of a poor, sinful woman. Ah, they did

not know that His mission was life and not death. The accusers went away to death but the poor woman was saved by the hand that wrote in the sand. How many thousands of men, women and children have been saved, clothed, fed and made happy in central Carolina by the hand writing of God in the sands of the High Hills of the Santee? Are they grateful? Do they appreciate His forethought and protection? Or are they densely ignorant to read His message of love, providence and forethought in the high sand-dunes that roll back the refreshing showers from the vapors of the Atlantic to fill their corn bins and replenish their bank accounts?

A Rare Honor

Dr. Edward R. Hipp, a Newberrian in Charlotte, was recently elected as an alumni member of the Alpha of Virginia chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha. As the chapter "exists primarily to recognize scholarship, character and promise of future efficiency in the students of medical schools," only one-fifth of each graduating class in schools only of the highest standing being eligible of election, it will at once be seen that the election of Dr. Hipp is a mark of great honor, esteem and confidence. "Election to this honorary fraternity is the highest honor the medical student of today can attain in his four year medical course." Dr. Theodore Hough, dean of the University of Virginia, medical department, in conferring this honor upon Dr. Hipp, says: "The chapter has all along planned to avail itself of the privilege of electing from the alumni men whose names will make the roster of the Alpha of Virginia representative of the best of the past," etc.

The City of Not At All

"Tomorrow I'll do it," says Bennie;  
"I will, by and by," says Seth;  
"Not now—pretty soon" says Jennie;  
"In a minute," says little Beth.  
O, dear little people, remember  
That, true as the stars in the sky,  
The little streets of Tomorrow,  
Pretty Soon, By and By,  
Lead one and all  
As straight, they say,  
As the king's highway,  
To the city of Not at All.

—Selected.

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WANTED IN GEORGIA

Man Said to Be Under Arrest, at Newberry

The State, 5th.

Governor Cooper yesterday received requisition papers from Governor Hardwick of Georgia for the return to that state of A. M. Marlow, wanted in Atlanta on a charge of abandonment. The papers allege that Marlow abandoned his wife and child and Mrs. Marlow swears her husband beat her twice at Greenville while she was living with him for a short time there. Marlow, according to a letter with the requisition, is under arrest at Newberry. It was indicated at the executive offices that a hearing would be held on the papers from Georgia.